

**Little Hoover Commission  
Youth Crime and Violence Prevention in California  
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation Perspective  
Patti Culross, M.D., M.P.H.  
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**Overview of the Packard Foundation**

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation was created in 1964 by David Packard (1912-1996), co-founder of the Hewlett-Packard Company and Lucile Salter Packard (1914-1987). They believed in the power of a unique type of organization—the nonprofit organization—formed with private funding and advanced by strong leadership. Nonprofit organizations that serve the public, such as universities, community groups, youth agencies, and family planning centers, constitute a great American tradition that complements government efforts to focus on society’s needs. In many ways, these private organizations are more effective than those of government, and using private funds for public purposes serves to channel the personal commitment of millions of individuals who participate as volunteers or donors. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, now in its thirty-seventh year, has a strong commitment to strengthening nonprofit organizations with the hope and expectation of conserving and enhancing natural resources and improving the quality of life in communities, the nation, and the world.

*Funding Programs*

Located in Los Altos, the Packard Foundation has six funding programs: conservation and environmental protection; population control and family planning; science education and research; children, families, and communities; arts; and organizational effectiveness and philanthropy. These programs fund a range of activities locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally that seek to improve the quality of life for diverse populations. The Foundation also makes significant investments in the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute in Moss Landing and the Lucile Salter Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford.

*Children, Families, and Communities*

The Foundation’s work in youth violence prevention resides within the Children, Families and Communities department (CFC). CFC seeks to promote the health, development, and economic security of vulnerable children; to protect these children from violence; and to strengthen the capacity of families, communities, and the nation to care for all of America’s children. CFC places children at the center of its efforts but views children in the context of their families, their communities, and the broader state and national policy environment. CFC’s grantmaking approach and strategic investments focus on access to quality health care, child and youth development, the economic security of families, the reduction of violence in homes and communities, the transformation of local communities, and the building of a national capacity and will to support children.

The CFC grantmaking approach reflects the belief that multiple and overlapping strategies are required to initiate and sustain long-term change. Consequently, the Foundation selectively supports innovative services and demonstration programs; efforts to develop knowledge through research and evaluation; activities that build institutional capacity, improve practices, and strengthen leadership; information dissemination; and efforts to promote public awareness and policy change on behalf of children. The program works at the local, regional, state, and national levels, using local experience to inform policy and practice at the regional, state, and national levels, and applying perspectives from the broader arenas to the local counties. An array of activities is supported in the Northern California counties of San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey. Proposals for direct service programs outside this local area do not receive priority, but proposals for policy and research activities statewide and nationally are accepted. Grantmaking, for the most part, is responsive rather than initiative-driven and grants are not made outside of the United States.

#### *The Break the Cycle of Violence Program*

Since 1993, the Packard Foundation has funded community-based service delivery programs, policy development, and research in violence prevention with the goal of protecting children from violence at home, in school, and in the community. During that time, over \$10 million has been committed to community youth violence and gun violence prevention. Grantmaking activity in these areas is located in CFC's Break the Cycle of Violence (BCOV) Program and is based on the notion that children who are victims of or witness violence are at increased risk of perpetuating violence or continuing to be victims throughout their lives. In 2000, BCOV funding has concentrated on programs that improve outcomes for children in the child protection system, reduce firearm injuries to children, and explore the linkages among child abuse, domestic violence, and youth violence.

Work in child protection has focused on implementing the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act, sharing best practices to recruit and support foster care and adoptive families, and addressing the co-occurrence of child abuse and childhood exposure to domestic violence. Work in gun violence prevention has focused on assisting diverse communities in coalition-building for gun violence prevention, and facilitating the development of more complete information about how children and adolescents are affected by firearm access and injury. The linkages work recognizes that child victims of violence experience victimization from multiple forms of violence and that the relationships among child maltreatment, domestic violence, and youth and gun violence have received little attention from practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and grantmakers. The BCOV program, therefore, is supporting activities to bridge these three fields of violence.

#### **The Packard Foundation Experience in Community Youth Violence Prevention Funding**

In general, it has been easier to support the development and implementation of programs than to determine the effects of any programs. Program evaluation in violence prevention is in an immature state. Developing appropriate outcomes and measures of outcomes is

challenging and requires long-term financial investment and much patience. As school and community youth violence worsened in the early 1990's, programs were implemented in a crisis environment and very little attention was paid to determining if programs or policies were doing what they intended to do. As a consequence, there is very little definitive evidence of what works. In addition, we discovered that local, state and national information systems, such as injury surveillance systems and police records, that might be used to help evaluate the impact of programs and policies are underdeveloped or nonexistent. Thus, Foundation funding has been directed toward addressing the information and evaluation gaps while at the same time continuing to help communities take action against youth violence. What follows is a brief discussion of the Foundation's experience in funding in community youth violence prevention.

*School and community-based conflict resolution and nonviolence skill-building projects:* Over a number of years, the Foundation supported the development and implementation of these types of programs including curriculum development and best practices dissemination. For the most part, the Foundation responded to requests from schools and communities that desperately wanted to do something about the increased aggressiveness, hostility, and violence they were seeing among children and youth. Schools, in particular, experienced tremendous pressure from parents and policymakers to address youth violence. However, the Foundation has no evidence of the long-term effectiveness of any of the supported programs. This is partly due to a failure to fund significant evaluations of the programs and partly due to the inherent difficulty of evaluating them. This dilemma is nationwide—we are aware of no long-term evaluations of conflict resolution programs. We are not currently funding new programs in this area but rather are reviewing our approach.

*Community organizing:* The Packard Foundation supports communities—neighborhoods, cities, counties—coming together to discuss and identify their specific problems with youth violence and to develop plans of action. In Salinas, the Foundation supported an ongoing process to address youth violence. The process began with activism in individual neighborhoods and evolved into a citywide collaborative planning effort. The Foundation also supported Santa Clara County's violence prevention planning process that led to implementing strategies addressing relationship violence, youth violence, alcohol availability, and firearm availability. The Foundation is supporting local and national community organizing and coalition-building around gun violence prevention and community-driven strategies to create prevention programs that bridge the fields of child abuse, domestic violence, and youth violence.

Although, the long-term results of these community-based efforts remain to be seen communities have been energized to address violence in a myriad of ways. This is significant because, although it is important to know if programs work, it may be that one of the most critical results of just *trying* to do something about youth violence has been to create a greater sense of community mission, cohesiveness and connectedness, and a sense among youth that they are cared for and valued. This type of result is very difficult to measure and, certainly, the causes of community and school violence by youth are complex. However, to the extent that community youth violence is fed by feelings of

isolation and alienation, boredom, aimlessness, and pessimism, attention from adults and the greater community may be one of the most effective interventions.

*Policy development:* The Foundation supports efforts to create, implement, and evaluate new and innovative violence prevention policies through grants and through CFC's journal *The Future of Children*. *The Future of Children* provides comprehensive reviews and analyses of issues related to children's welfare. For example, in keeping with our notion that children exposed to violence are at risk for later violent victimization and/or perpetration, a recent issue of the journal reviewed the literature on children exposed to adult domestic violence, analyzed the service and legal responses to the problem, and made recommendations for improvements to intervention and research. Two important findings from the journal were that stable public funding sources are needed to support comprehensive and coordinated community-based services for battered women and their children, as well as program evaluations and replication of effective interventions, and ongoing public support is needed for effective prevention programs that address the underlying causes of domestic violence. The Foundation will provide follow-up funding to efforts in this area, but we also hope that this journal issue will inform the discussion about the role the state can play in addressing domestic violence.

*Research:* The Foundation supports research for program and policy development, for evaluating programs and policies, and for filling in data and information gaps to better track and evaluate the impact of violence prevention programs and policies. For example, some of our earliest funding in gun violence prevention has been to shore up and even create comprehensive data systems to collect and analyze the prevalence, nature, and circumstances of firearm and all violent injury. We have supported Santa Clara County, the state department of health services, and Harvard University to begin or continue to develop violent injury information systems. The information systems need is huge, however, and cannot be sustained with any available amount of foundation or other private funding. The public has a vested interest in supporting information collection to monitor the need for and effectiveness of public programs and policies. The development and maintenance of these information systems is a core government function and responsibility.

### **California has an opportunity to lead**

The information needs discussed above serve to illustrate the limitations of foundation involvement in the public arena. Foundations excel at supporting projects that are risky and innovative, and that generate ideas. Foundations can support demonstration and model programs and policies, evaluate these programs, and disseminate research and evaluation results and best practices. Foundations are less able, however, to provide significant levels of ongoing funding for sustaining programs, except in very targeted ways. Public funding is necessary to "scale-up" projects, replicate effective interventions and policies, and evaluate their success.

California has the opportunity to lead in violence prevention. In recent years, projects funded by the California Wellness Foundation, the Packard Foundation, and other foundations have led to significant innovation and change in community youth violence

prevention in this, the nation's most populous state. Some specific recommendations for state action are below:

- Focus on youth violence prevention rather than incarceration. Criminal justice sanctions alone do not stop and prevent youth violence, yet, criminal justice and institutional funding far outstrips funding for violence prevention at all levels of government. Polls have repeatedly shown the public supports youth violence prevention over incarceration.
- Address the pervasive availability and youth access to firearms.
- Fund scale-ups of effective programs (to the extent that they exist) without diluting quality.
- Reconfigure state policies to eliminate strict categorical funding streams to allow communities to respond to violence across fields.
- Evaluate the role the media play in youth violence.
- Make children and adolescents a priority. Emphasize jobs paying a living wage, quality housing, and food as basic needs for all families. Support access to quality health care, childcare and education for all children and adolescents. Help youth go to school rather than to prison.